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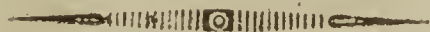
DISAGREEMENTS

BETWEEN THE

MEMBERS OF THE LATE

ARMY MEDICAL BOARD,

NOT INCLUDED AMONG THE PAPERS PRINTED BY
ORDER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.



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GREAT BRITAIN, Army Medical Board

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INTRODUCTION.

AS some passages of the Official Documents concerning the Inquiry into the late Expedition to Zealand, printed by order of the House of Commons, have disclosed the existence of disagreements among the members of the late Army Medical Board ; and as the statements therein made are but partial and imperfect, it has been thought right to print the three following Letters, addressed by the three respective members of that board, to the Secretary at War, which will convey much important information, and enable the reader to judge correctly of the origin and nature of these disagreements.

Towards a better understanding of these Letters, it must be observed, that in April last, when the contagious fever, which had spread through a great part of the army at home, upon the return of the troops from Spain had abated, the Physician and Surgeon General transmitted to the Secretary at War communications from several army physicians, with a letter from themselves, wherein they stated, that the accompanying communications would demonstrate “ the calamities which must ensue if the system of Regimental Hospitals on foreign service was to be persevered in, to supersede the use of General Hospitals ;” and would also show “ that the great virulence and progress of the contagious fever among the troops at Portsmouth, Plymouth, &c. and the consequent loss of about a thousand valuable lives had been principally occasioned by

a want of suitable buildings, and other provisions for the accommodation of the miserable objects who arrived from Spain, and who would have been readily and comfortably landed immediately at extensive well-constructed Hospitals, had they been ready for their reception : — which might easily have been the case, as we (the Physician and Surgeon General) in our Letter of 21 Jan. to the Commander in Chief solicited that no time might be lost in giving his commands to take measures for immediately putting the General Hospitals into a proper condition to answer the exigencies of the service, having from fifteen years experience known what was likely to occur at the end of a campaign on foreign service. We had not, however, the honour of any command on this subject.”

Copies of these letters having been sent to Mr. Knight, Inspector General of Army Hospitals, he applied to the Commander in Chief, and, without the knowledge of the Physician and Surgeon General, obtained the appointment of a Board of General Officers to investigate and report upon medical subjects; and having adduced before this Board the testimony of several Deputy Inspectors who had acted immediately under his orders, and had therefore strong inducements to justify themselves as well as their Patron, a report was made by the Board which in general terms acquitted all who had been medically employed in regard to the sickness which had prevailed in the army as before mentioned, although there were at the same time other parts

of the Report which were not very consistent with the general acquittal, especially that which pointedly condemns the treatment of large numbers of sick upon the regimental hospital plan, which Mr. Knight had exclusively adopted for the sick of the army returned from Spain.

In forwarding to the Physician and Surgeon General a copy of this Report, without any part of the evidence on which it was founded, (and for which the Surgeon General applied in vain) the Secretary at War signified his concurrence with the Commander in Chief "in thinking that it would have become the Physician and Surgeon General to have made themselves more accurately acquainted with the matters contained in this letter and its enclosures, before they had brought them forward for this public investigation."

In answer to this communication a letter was written by the Surgeon General to the Secretary at War, dated the 28th July, 1809, from which the following is an extract, viz.

"The supposition on which your Lordship's reproof seems principally founded, i. e. that the Physician General and myself had brought forward the matters contained in our letter to the late Secretary at War and its inclosures *with a view* to that *public investigation* which followed, is completely erroneous; as must appear, if your Lordship will have the goodness to refer to that Letter, where we have expressly stated that we had "thought it our duty to send the enclosed Letters" for the "inspection" of the then Secre-

tary at War, and “to be communicated to the Commander in Chief if deemed proper,” as demonstrating very clearly, “the necessity of not only not *shutting up the General Hospitals* of Gosport, Plymouth and Deal,” but likewise evincing the calamities which must ensue if the system of *Regimental Hospitals* on Foreign service is to be anxiously persevered in, to supersede the use of General Hospitals.” And your Lordship will find that there is no room even to suspect that we had any other object or purpose in view than to *obviate hereafter* a repetition of those evils which are admitted in the Report itself to have occurred at Salamanca, *from the adoption of the Regimental System*, and those other evils which I cannot yet help believing to have occurred at home, from the causes mentioned in the letters enclosed by us. I certainly had not (and I believe this was the Physician-General’s case) the least intention or expectation of producing any *such* Investigation as is supposed: and indeed it never would have occurred to me that a Board of General Officers could be the most proper for a Medical Enquiry; nor has my opinion on that point been changed by any thing which I have seen in the Report made by the Board in question, however respectably composed and qualified to judge of other matters. Your Lordship will, I trust, also find a farther justification of the Physician-General and myself in our joint letter beforementioned, wherein it is stated that the Physician-General had induced the Army Physicians in question to commit to

writing the verbal information which they had previously given to him, in consequence of two Conversations which he had had with the Commander in Chief and Deputy Secretary at War, wherein they had suggested that it would be advisable that something in writing should be sent in on the subject." And I humbly conceive that after being informed of the wishes my superiors had thus expressed, I could not refuse to concur with the Physician-General in writing and signing the letter before mentioned, as the two points to which they related *prospectively*, were both within my own department.

In regard to the other part of your Lordship's admonition, i. e. that "it would have become us to have made ourselves more accurately acquainted with the matters contained in our letters and their enclosures before we brought them forward," your Lordship will, I hope, permit me to observe, that I have never been able to discover a single untruth, nor even an error in any of the Letters so written or transmitted by myself and the Physician-General; nor have I seen or heard any thing calculated to weaken my confidence in them: in fact, the Board of General Officers have admitted in their report, "that irregularities did arise at Salamanca which ought as far as possible to be prevented," and which, they say, "it is therefore fit to have *reported* and *made known*," and it will appear from the inclosed observations upon the report, that irregularities did occur in the arrangements made at home for the

army returned from Spain, fit also to be “reported and make known,” though not noticed in the Report.

In regard to any additional information which your Lordship and the Commander in Chief appear to have believed that it was our duty to procure, in order to our becoming “more accurately acquainted with the matters” in question, I beg leave to state, that on a former occasion in 1802, when an inquiry took place concerning Dr. Jackson’s conduct at the Army Depot Hospital, we were censured for having, (as was erroneously supposed) made “applications to officers in inferior stations, for their opinion and judgment of their superior” a censure afterwards confirmed by his Royal Highness the then Commander in Chief : and as it must have been impossible for us to seek any such additional information on the subjects in question from any Medical Officer who was not inferior to Mr. Knight (who, as is proved by the event, would have considered any attempt of that nature as an attack on himself) or Dr. Shapter, we were necessarily restrained from seeking for such evidence. Dr. Shapter was indeed accountable to me for his conduct in Spain and Portugal, and I lost no time in calling on him for such explanations as seemed expedient ; and it was not until I had done this, (which was all that I considered myself entitled to do) that I concurred with the Physician General in sending our joint Letter and its enclosures, the explanations given by Dr. Shapter having afforded me no satisfaction respecting the matters mentioned in those Letters.”

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE
LORD GRANVILLE LEVISON GOWER,
SECRETARY AT WAR, &c.

[COPY.]

*Army Medical Board Office,
July 18, 1809.*

MY LORD,

I HAVE been honored with the communication of papers that have passed upon the investigation by a Board of General Officers, of the Hospital Arrangements in Spain, and on the subsequent return of the army to England.

I by no means presume to call in question any step that has been taken during the Enquiry, or to animadvert on the result, but I feel it incumbent on me, as a public officer, desirous of standing fair in the eyes of the world, explicitly to state to your Lordship, and the Commander in Chief, that it is impossible for me, either with a view to the advantage of the service, or to the safety of my own character, longer to act in a public capacity with my two colleagues.

I forbear to enter into a relative view of our services;—to advert to the 5th Report of the Military Commis-

sioners, or to the disgraceful controversies that have grown out of it. Suffice it to observe, that I have taken no share in the latter ; but in the constant expectation of some useful change, or new constitution in the office, have for eighteen months patiently borne up against the many embarrassments thrown in my way, and the envious shafts levelled at me. These last were too contemptible for a formal and official complaint ; yet, on a late occasion, when my administration of office became questioned by those, who, as my colleagues, should rather have afforded me assistance, I could no longer remain silent. I instantly met the occasion, and challenged the most rigid enquiry. It was acceded to ; yet, when the moment of trial came, those very persons who had preferred the complaint, and encouraged others to impeach the conduct of their superiors, instantly shrunk from the responsibility of the charge, and denied that it had any personal reference to me. It could not apply to any one else ; nor could my colleagues be mistaken in the individual, as they appealed to the then Commander in Chief, against the special delegation of the trust to me by his Royal Highness :—the man indeed was identified in the acts, and I felt myself answerable for any censure that might attach to the measure ; but if the most artful sophistry could pervert this plain meaning, the turn which the enquiry took would in a moment expose the subterfuge. The Report does not in the least degree touch on the *preference of system*, but pointedly and unequivocally applies to the *persons officiating*, by declaring, “ That
“ so far from having found any pretence for
“ imputing blame or neglect to any part of the
“ Medical Department charged with the duty for
“ providing for their reception and treatment, we
“ cannot but express our satisfaction, not unmixed
“ with surprise, that so large a number of sick
“ could have been so suddenly and so well provided
“ for.”

Such is the Report of the General Officers ; and under their declaration (as far as that goes) my feelings are quieted. But to the Commander in Chief, and to your Lordship, I address myself for further protection. I entreat you to look at the future insubordination and indignities to which I may be subject, while linked with the same colleagues, and open to similar attacks from the same inferior and unpunished medical officers.

The case is not referable to myself alone : it applies to the whole of military life, unless it be assumed that the Medical Department of the army is not open to the same discipline and to the same protection. I have all the disposition necessary to discharge my duties to the public zealously and efficiently ; but in the situation that I now stand, my best exertions are paralyzed ;—the ground shakes under me, and I dare not risk responsibility with authority so questionable.

A new arrangement of the office has indeed been long talked of, and promised, to heal the divisions of the department, and to restore its efficiency to the service. It has not yet taken place ; and feeling as I do, how much the evils multiply with the delay, and how particularly my duties are affected by it, I am compelled most seriously to invite the attention of the higher authorities to the subject, and to solicit an immediate arrangement, that shall completely separate me from two men, whose official conduct has been so offensive to myself as well as to the decorum and discipline of the service.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

your obedient

humble servant,

(Signed)

F. KNIGHT.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD GRANVILLE LEVISON GOWER,

SECRETARY AT WAR, &c.



[Copy.]

MY LORD,

I Had lately the honour of addressing a Letter to your Lordship, and requesting that all judgment might be suspended on the subject of Mr. Knight's Letter of the 18th inst. till I could have time to answer the Charges therein made, concluding he could at least bring proofs to substantiate some of them. I have applied to him for this purpose, but find there is not a single specific Charge against me, only his Letter above mentioned contains, as your Lordship perceives, General Invectives, which requires only to answer in a General Way.

Mr. Knight appears to have written the Letter to your Lordship in great anger with the Board of General Officers for not having severely censured five physicians of the army, for having stated their opinions on the subject of the want of accommodation when our troops land-

ed from Spain, and for having given a decided opinion against the use of Regimental Hospitals in preference to General Hospitals on Service.—It would have been the greatest injustice to have censured these Gentlemen for their Letters to me, as their duty called on them to make the observations they did to prevent future similar disasters. Four of these had returned with the army from Spain, and had witnessed all the calamities.—The fifth was warranted in the observations he made on the accommodation of the sick at Ramsgate by the authority of General Hope's opinion.

Here it will be necessary to apprise your Lordship of the changes which have taken place in the Medical Department of the army.

It was evident to his Majesty and his Ministers, that whilst the business of the medical concerns of the army was carried on by an individual, as in the time of Mr. Adair and Mr. Hunter, great abuses had been the consequence.—This individual was liable to be influenced by every man in power.—There was no controul over his actions. Often the care of the sick was intrusted to those who had interest enough to get appointments, not to those of superior education and merit.—Having the ear of the Commander in Chief, every thing was done according to his pleasure, and as it was not even then (the army much less than at present) in any individual's power to transact such various and complicated business, it was done by inferior officers and clerks. To remedy this, his Majesty in 1793 appointed a Board of three, the Physician General, Surgeon General, and Inspector of Hospitals ; every thing was determined by this Board. Responsibility attached to them all three, and from 1793 to Dec. 1801, when Mr. Knight succeeded on Mr. Rush's death there was no difference or dispute of any kind. Every body was satisfied. The Public saw that strict economy was observed, as will appear by the evidence before the Commissioners ; for the Board acted on fixed and known laws,

agreed on and approved by the Commander in Chief and the Secretary at War. When Mr. Knight was appointed, though apparently the business of a Board went on, yet it was soon obvious that Mr. Knight had the principal confidence of the C. C. The title of Inspector General was given to him, the efficacy of the Board decreased, and its business, which had been partially divided to the 3 members from 1798, now became totally distinct, except on References from head quarters and Medical Examinations.—It is necessary for me to state this, to explain the circumstances to your Lordship, though I very gratefully acknowledge that on all occasions I experienced from the late Commander in Chief every personal attention and kindness. With Mr. Knight I never had any difference, except on my having mentioned to the Commissioners that he received four pounds a day, with bat and forage (which bat and forage, however, I afterwards found to be attached to his office,) whereas the Physician and Surgeon General receive little more than 30s. a day, though their long services seemed to have entitled them to equal pay with their colleague. —This gave Mr. Knight great offence ; but I considered the momentary altercation on the subject as past and forgotten, and as I have ever acted cordially with him, and conceived that I was living with him in harmony and good understanding, what must therefore have been my surprise when I received a copy of his letter to your Lordship. Angry expressions, however, and general invective, prove nothing ; and it is only by inference that I make out and collect that he complains of me on two points, viz. that I transmitted to the late Secretary at War Dr. Bancroft's Paper on Regimental Hospitals, and the Report of the five Physicians on the want of accommodation for the troops returned from Spain.—On the first I must observe that I transmitted it officially, and never read its contents.—The Secretary at War thought the paper of too much consequence to be generally handed

about and commented on in the offices publicly, and therefore returned it to me to be communicated to our Board, without passing through the clerk's hands, and directed enquiry into the diets to be made if necessary. The paper was read at the Board, and contained animadversions on Mr. Knight; but for this I was not answerable, as I stated that I had not previously read it, and assured them of the truth of my assertion.—The facts alledged by Dr. Bancroft went to prove that the stoppages from the sick soldier in hospital were exorbitant, and the comforts he received were very scanty; so much so, that full diet to convalescents was never given in a regimental hospital. The first Regimental Hospital Return which happened to present itself to us, was examined, and we there found Dr. Bancroft's assertion strictly true. Not one full diet appeared in a whole year. On the instant we were prevented from pursuing the investigation, by Mr. Knight's declaring this was a personal attack on him, and that he would not proceed in the investigation.

The above caution of the Secretary at War was highly judicious; for if the exorbitancy of the stoppages, and the slender benefits the sick soldier derived from them, were generally known in the army, most serious consequences might ensue. Your Lordship will no doubt read Dr. Bancroft's paper, and form your own judgment, but I trust you perceive that no blame can be imputed to me, who merely transmitted it officially.

As to the second point, I appeal to your Lordship, if it was possible for me either to suppress, or refuse to forward to head quarters such important observations as were contained in the Physician's Report. When above 1000 deaths occurred in the months of February and March, in consequence of the return of the troops from Spain, it surely was the duty of the physicians, who saw that the want of preparation for the return of the sick was the probable cause of such singular mortality, to make reports to me on the subject, and this Mr. Knight calls

preferring complaints against him, and encouraging impeachment of the conduct of superiors. I leave it entirely to your Lordship's judgment, how far, by the most strained implication, it is here possible I can be thought to paralyze his exertions, or to have acted against the decorum and discipline of the army. He terms these Physicians inferior and unpunished Medical Officers—what should they be punished for? Did they shrink from their duty, arduous and dangerous as it was? Did not two out of the five narrowly escape death?

But after all, how are Mr. Knight's colleagues responsible for Dr. Bancroft's Observations on Regimental Hospitals, or the Reports of the five Physicians? And yet these are the only charges which can be made out. The rest of Mr. Knight's Letter is mere declamation, and praying your Lordship to forward a new arrangement of the Board.—This new arrangement is not so easily made; it is of the utmost importance to the great army we now have, and such a large portion of it now on foreign service. Fifteen years close attention to the duties of my office (to the great loss of myself and family, from having been so taken from my profession at the best part of my life,) have taught me that the Medical Department of the army cannot now be carried on by an individual, nor by any but professional men, indeed the country at large would not bear it; and the Commissioners in their Report strongly suggest the propriety of restoring the Board to all the functions it exercised prior to the alteration in 1798. But on this important subject I trust your Lordship will attentively consider what I wrote for the information of the late Secretary at War and Mr. Perceval. I think it only necessary to repeat what I there mentioned, that if the Board, as wisely constituted by his Majesty in 1793, be reinstated, the recommendations to all appointments should be sanctioned by the majority of the Board, and the whole expenditure of the department should be controuled by the whole Board; they should pass every

account, and be responsible for the vouchers; the pay of the three members should be equal, though two out of the three have served so much longer than the third. It is to be presumed, that what was economically conducted from 1793 to 1798 would again be managed on the same principle; and the Commissioners state that they can find no reason why the alteration in 1798 took place.

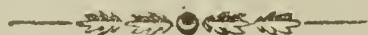
I have the honour to be,

My Lord, &c. &c.

(Signed)

L. PEPYS.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE
 LORD GRANVILLE LEVISON GOWER,
 SECRETARY AT WAR, &c.



[COPY.]

*Army Medical Board Office,
 August 4th, 1809.*

MY LORD,

I Have now the honor to fulfil the engagement to which I pledged myself in my letter of the 20th ultimo, in which I entreated your Lordship to suspend your judgment in regard to my conduct until I should have had a reasonable time to answer the aspersions and injurious misrepresentations contained in the Inspector General's letter of the 18th ultimo.

That the disagreement between the Inspector General and his colleagues is now become most serious is a truth, which I have no desire to conceal; but in joining issue with Mr. Knight upon this point, I must assert most unequivocally, that he is exclusively chargeable with the blame resulting from this disagreement, as having been the original author and promoter of every thing which has occurred to disturb the harmony of the Army

Origin of the
 dissensions in
 the Army
 Medical Board.

Medical Board, in which no misunderstanding had prevailed until, upon the death of Mr. Rush, Mr. Knight was unfortunately appointed his successor.—It is well known that he entered his office with a disposition extremely hostile towards me, originating in an erroneous opinion that I had been the cause of his not obtaining the office of Inspector of Regimental Hospitals upon the death of Mr. Hunter; and this disposition, joined to his boundless ambition, seems to have prompted him to form projects for supplanting his colleagues, and securing to himself exclusively the direction and controul of the Medical Department.—With this end in view, he has for the last seven years made it his practice almost daily to visit the Horse-Guards and the War-Office, (which his predecessor had not done, and which the duties of his office did not require him to do,) and often, as I believe, with the double purpose of ingratiating himself, and giving unfavourable impressions or opinions respecting his colleagues.

This truth is, I am persuaded, within the knowledge of the late and present Commander in Chief, as well as of Colonel Gordon, of the late as well as present Deputy Secretary at War, and of others; and these officers must also know how impossible it has been for me to have acted in any such way towards Mr. Knight, especially as I had seldom gone, during that long period, to the offices in question, and never but on my official business. Indeed, my intercourse with these offices has been almost wholly confined to written documents, by which, if I have ever acted unfairly towards Mr. Knight, the fact may be readily ascertained and adduced against me.

The disposition on Mr. Knight's part to encroachment and innovation began to manifest itself even while his commission was preparing; for though his office had been, from the first, held not only by myself, but by such respectable men as Mr. Adair, Mr. Hunter, and Mr. Rush, with the title of Inspector of Regimental Hospitals only, a title perfectly suited to the duties of that

office in their fullest extent, he had influence enough to procure an order for his being gazetted, with the title of Inspector General of Army Hospitals; a step wholly unknown, as I was then assured, and unexpected at the War Office till the order arrived; and this alteration was as much at variance with the plain matter of fact in regard to his duties, as with all former usage;—for, as by his Majesty's warrant of 12th March, 1798, all the General Hospitals were (as they are still) placed under the direction of the Surgeon General exclusively, Mr. Knight could have no right nor pretence to assume the direction of any but the Regimental Hospitals, and consequently there could be nothing in his duties to require such an extension of his power, with his title.—But as one encroachment generally leads and is intended to prepare the way to another, Mr. Knight, though the *junior* member of the Medical Board, formed a project for getting into his own hand the sole patronage and nomination of *all the higher* Offices of the Medical Department.—It had long, and I believe immemorially, been the practice for the Inspector of Regimental Hospitals to employ Army Physicians and Surgeons to inspect Regimental Hospitals occasionally in the districts at home, as an aid and assistance to himself, and they had, so far as I know, always performed the duty satisfactorily; but Mr. Knight thought proper almost immediately to alter this practice, and in their stead to employ Inspectors or Assistant Inspectors; and having established this innovation he made it (as he doubtless had originally intended) the foundation of a claim to the nomination of such Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors as were to be employed in or about the Regimental Hospitals at home (the nomination of whom had always been vested in the Board collectively, with whom indeed it had been left by his Majesty's warrant of 12th March, 1798,) alleging that he ought to be allowed to select those for whose conduct he must be responsible.—I observed to him in answer, that I was equally responsible for the Inspectors and As-

Mr. Knight first employs Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors at home.

Changes the nomination of these Officers from the Board to himself.

sistant Inspectors employed on foreign service and in the General Hospitals at home, and for the same reason must be equally entitled to nominate such of those officers as were to be employed under me. To this he professed to agree, and promised to content himself with the nomination of *those only* who should be employed *at home* in the Inspection of Regimental Hospitals; and, on this assurance, I readily acquiesced in Mr. Knight's desire. But having gained this ground he seems to have availed himself of it, contrary to his profession, to make a further encroachment; for it did happen that the Commander in Chief was soon persuaded that there ought to be no distinction whatsoever in the situation of Inspectors and Deputy Inspectors, whether *at home* or *abroad*, and that the recommendation and appointment should be indiscriminately and exclusively vested in the Inspector General of Hospitals; I accordingly received a notification to that effect from Colonel Clinton in April 1804, in answer to an application from me upon that subject, dated the 11th of that month.

Having thus extended his patronage, Mr. Knight had soon afterwards an opportunity of increasing its value, by procuring in May following, an abolition of the title of Assistant Inspector, and giving to those who held it the name of Deputy Inspector, with an addition of 5s. per diem to their pay.—In these several ways he first greatly increased the *number* of inspectorial officers, by employing them exclusively for the duties which had been previously performed by physicians and surgeons; also, in the next place, he obtained the exclusive nomination of the officers whose number was so increased, and afterwards augmented the value of those multiplied appointments.

The office of Assistant Inspector had been created eight or ten years before, in favour of particular surgeons, who could not, according to the Physician General's Regulation, be made physicians; but who were thought deserving of some equivalent promotion. Although

Mr. Knight
changes their
title and raises
their pay.

Mr. Knight
raises the De-
puty Inspec-
tors above the
Physicians.

Which is the
cause of great
discontent
amongst them.

Mr Knight
appoints Dr.
Borland his
Assistant in the
office in oppo-
sition to the
Physician Ge-
neral and Sur-
geon General's
wishes.

it may not be perfectly relevant to the subject of Mr. Knight's encroachments and interference with my duties, yet it is so closely connected therewith, that I may be allowed here to observe, that when the office of Assistant Inspector was abolished, and the holders of it made Deputy Inspectors, a considerable number of individuals, who, until then, had only ranked *with* the physicians, and *with equal pay*, were at once *raised above* them, with an *addition of pay*; and thus the office of Physician to his Majesty's forces was comparatively degraded; nor was this degradation rendered less offensive by the determination, which Mr. Knight had taken, to exclude the army physicians from any promotion to either of the inspectorial offices, which had previously and immemorially been at least as open to them as to the surgeons, and thus in effect to deprive the former of all chance of promotion, contrary to the expectations which had been held out to them when they entered his Majesty's service;—but it is relevant to say, that, in this mode, Mr. Knight has produced a mischievous division in the Medical Department of the army, rendering the physicians, on the one hand, highly discontented with what they consider as unjust and oppressive treatment; and, on the other hand, gratifying and attaching immediately to himself those, whose interests have been promoted by that treatment, and thus constituting himself the head of a party; by which proceeding I have been aggrieved.

Lest Mr. Knight's own enmities and ambitious views should not of themselves prove sufficiently active, he chose, in the beginning of 1805, to connect himself most intimately with Dr. Borland, who, of all men in the world, excepting Dr. Jackson, was the most hostile, as well as disagreeable to the Physician General and myself; and, although we informed Mr. Knight of this fact (with which, however, he was previously well acquainted) he completely disregarded the information, and introduced this person into the office as his assistant,

alleging that private considerations must yield to the good of the service; as if there had not been many others better qualified than Dr. Borland to serve the public, and even to serve Mr. Knight in every fair and honest purpose;—and yet, when my assistant, Mr. R. Keate, Inspector of Hospitals, lately expected, with the late Commander in Chief's approbation, to be employed in Spain, and I applied for leave to avail myself, during his absence, of the assistance of Dr. Bancroft, his Royal Highness the late Commander in Chief was persuaded (doubtless by Mr. Knight) to refuse my request, and also to express his displeasure at my supposed want of attention to the preservation of harmony at the army Medical Board, in asking for the temporary aid of Dr. Bancroft, because he was understood not to be on amicable terms with Dr. Borland; leaving me to conclude, that tho' Mr. Knight had totally disregarded the wishes and feelings of his colleagues in introducing Dr. Borland into the office, it was the duty of the Surgeon General, on a similar occasion to consult the inclination even of Mr. Knight's *assistant*, whilst that assistant was publicly accused of false swearing and imposture;—besides which it was well known to Mr. Knight at the same time, that no communication existed between my present assistant and Dr. Borland.—Surely, my Lord, the man who could so far mislead and abuse the confidence of his Royal Highness will not readily obtain that of your Lordship.

Thus united with Dr. Borland, Mr. Knight not only continued but multiplied his inroads and encroachments upon the rights and duties of my particular office, and in ways extremely offensive to me. Among these I may mention that the General Hospitals had, by his Majesty's Regulations of March 1798, been placed under my immediate direction, and, therefore, it might reasonably have been expected, that, if Mr. Knight for that or any better reason, wished to break them up, he would have deemed it but decorous and proper, when invading my

And with Dr. Borland breaks up the General Hospitals without consulting with the Surgeon General.

Department to have consulted, or at least communicated with me on the subject. Instead, however, of this attention, he availed himself of the opportunities which were afforded him, to procure an order completely unexpected by me, for emptying and shutting up successively the General Hospitals of Deal, Plymouth, and Gosport; and to render this proceeding the more offensive, Dr. Borland was selected and dispatched to execute the duty. Dr. Borland had been previously dispatched to Guernsey and Jersey, where also, without any consultation or communication with me, under whom the duties of those places had always been performed, various alterations were made by him, some of which afterwards proved so useless that it became expedient to restore them nearly to their former state, and thus to put an end to an expence which had been unnecessarily created.

Mr. Knight sends Dr. Borland to Jersey and Guernsey without consulting the Surgeon General.

The alterations found useless and expensive and the former establishments nearly restored.

Mr. Knight obtains the controul of York Hospital, Chelsea.

Some time after these proceedings, I submitted to the Commander in Chief a proposal for reducing the establishment at the York Hospital, at Chelsea, (of which I had the direction, by his Majesty's regulations) where the number of patients had diminished, and on that occasion his Royal Highness was induced whilst he approved of my proposal, to transfer the direction of the hospital itself from the Surgeon General to the Inspector General.

Attempts to get the Depot Hospital under his direction, but is frustrated.

Having thus left none but the Army Depot Hospital in the Isle of Wight under my direction, Mr. Knight has lately attempted several offensive encroachments there, with the design of gaining the possession of that hospital also. This attempt however was frustrated by the wisdom of your Lordship's predecessor, who soon perceived the impropriety of the measures used by Mr. Knight, and was pleased to direct that this valuable establishment should be conducted as before.—For the particulars of this transaction I beg leave to refer your Lordship to the letters of the Secretary at War of the 20th April and 31st May, 1809, marked No. 1, to Mr. Knight's letter of the 11th April, No. 2, and to mine of the 20 March, 1809, No. 3.

- No. 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Antecedently to the two last transactions, another instance had occurred of Mr. Knight's unwarrantable and vexatious interference with my duties, in regard to the Army Depot Hospital; for proofs of which I beg to refer your Lordship to the accompanying copy of a letter from Mr. Knight to me of the 28th August, 1807, No. 4, and of one which, in consequence thereof, I wrote on the 29th, No. 5, to the Secretary at War, and which had the effect on that occasion of compelling Mr. Knight to desist from his unbecoming usurpation of authority within my department. He had however been successful in so many other of his invasions, that he was at length emboldened and determined to attempt the overthrow of the Army Medical Board, and possess himself exclusively of its patronage and prerogatives. Without insisting on the private communications, others equally, if not more injurious, were openly employed with the Commissioners of Military Enquiry to promote this object; and though no person particularly connected with the Physician General or myself, had been or was intended to be examined, matters were so arranged as to induce the Commissioners, as soon as the course and forms of their proceedings would permit, to call for the testimony of two of Mr. Knight's most devoted adherents, (to one of whom at least I could never have given offence,) who have been already publicly noticed by me for the incorrect evidence delivered by them to the Commissioners under the sanction of an Oath.

I know not how they may have been prompted to swear as they did, but their evidence was so perfectly and pointedly adapted to Mr. Knight's desire of gaining unmerited credit for his innovations in the regimental hospital system on the one hand, and on the other, of aspersing the official conduct of his colleagues, and disgracing in the public estimation both general hospitals and army physicians, (which being under the direction of the Physician General and myself he desired to suppress or to discard) that these obliging witnesses must have expected,

No. 4.

No. 5.

Mr. Knight attempts the overthrow of the Army Medical Board with the Commissioners of Military Enquiry.

at least, to recommend themselves strongly to Mr. Knight, by what they did on that occasion ; and such an expectation appears to have been singularly well founded, since Mr. Knight has continued to be their firmest friend and protector.

It seems fit to be here mentioned, that things were so well prepared at Dr. Borland's first examination, that when he was asked whether he could from his experience in the medical department of the army suggest any alterations in the system "likely to be beneficial to the public," he was provided with papers ready to be taken from his pocket and delivered, as will be seen at P. 159 of the Fifth Report of the Military Commissioners ; of the contents of these papers I am entirely ignorant, as they have not been published, but by another paper delivered some days after to the Commissioners, Dr. Borland clearly manifested his knowledge of, and his desire to co-operate in, Mr. Knight's project of becoming sole Director of the Army Medical Department.

In addition to these attacks on the Physician General and myself by Mr. Knight's confidential agents in the assumed and abused characters of witnesses, the Inspector General *unsolicited* came forward himself and recommended to the Military Commissioners, among other objects, "to call on the Physician and Surgeon General to "revise the list of articles composing the divisions of medicines for foreign service," to exclude some and vary the proportions of others, &c. (see P. 119 of the 5th Report); thus invading the department of his colleagues, and, in fact, charging them with gross negligence at least, if not with incompetence.

Instead of this attempt to injure his colleagues, it might have been expected that Mr. Knight, if he really entertained in the smallest degree those amicable dispositions towards them, which he would now so rigidly exact from us, would have privately suggested to them the alterations which in his opinion were likely to benefit the service ; for by so doing every good purpose would have

Mr. Knight recommends the calling on the Physician and Surgeon General to revise the assertions of medicines.

been more speedily obtained, though in that way he might not have been so able to hurt his colleagues in the opinion of the Commissioners, and of the Public. Notwithstanding this offensive proceeding, my desire to render the list of articles as perfect as possible induced me, a few months afterwards, to address Mr. Knight on the subject, concluding that from his recent officious interference with the administration of his colleagues, he must at least have supposed himself to be possessed of some useful information respecting the assortment of medicines for foreign service, and that, even if he had no regard for the public good, he would feel it to be both his duty and his interest to communicate that information. Instead of this, however, I obtained nothing but insulting language, as your Lordship will perceive by our correspondence herewith enclosed, consisting of a letter from me to Mr. Knight, dated 17th August, 1808, No. 6, his answer of the 29th August, No. 7, and my reply of the 1st September, No. 8: from all which your Lordship will of necessity conclude, that when Mr. Knight assumed the appearance of superiority of knowledge, and officiously advised the Commissioners to call upon his colleagues to revise and correct the pretended defects in the assortments of medicines, he either had no knowledge of any defect, or of any possible improvement in the list of articles which could warrant his injurious interference, or that he was so regardless of the welfare of the army and of the public interests as wilfully to withhold that knowledge; and which ever of these alternatives may be nearest the truth, your Lordship will, I conceive, find not much to applaud in Mr. Knight's conduct upon the occasion.

Further evidence of Mr. Knight's design to displace his colleagues, and become sole director of the Medical Department, may be found in his communications to the late Secretary at War in consequence of his command issued to the members of the Army Medical Board seven-

No. 6.

— 7.

— 8.

He refuses his aid in making new lists.

May 1808.
Mr. Knight on being directed to give his opinion on a new establishment, recommends one person to perform all the duties.

rally in May 1808 to deliver their opinions concerning the future arrangement of that department. By referring to Mr. Knight's answer to that order your Lordship will see evident proofs of his anxiety to place every thing in the hands of a single person, and you will have no doubt respecting the name of the person intended.

In Nov. 1808 the Secretary at War calls for the collective opinions of the Board for an allotment of duties in a new establishment of a board.

Mr. Knight repeats his former opinion in favor of one.

The Secretary at War again calls for joint opinions, and Mr. Knight refuses to co-operate with his colleagues.

Mr. Knight declines to obey an order of the Commander in

Indeed Mr. Knight's pertinacity on this subject was so invincible, that when the Secretary at War, in the November following, required the Members of the Army Medical Board to state their *collective* opinions concerning the most advantageous allotment of their duties jointly and separately, and intimated plainly an intention that a part at least of those duties should be executed by a Board, Mr. Knight persisted in repeating, by a *separate* answer, his former opinion, that no such Board should be allowed to exist; and when the Secretary at War signified his disapprobation thereof, and renewed his command that we should deliver our opinions jointly, upon the points mentioned in his former letter, Mr. Knight was so little disposed to respect this command, that he refused to co-operate with his colleagues on the subject thereof; and instead of signing the letter which, in consequence of that refusal, the Physician-General and myself had prepared for the Secretary at War, (dated 10th December last,) Mr. Knight declared he should send in a protest against the proposed allotment of duties to, and even against the existence of, any Medical Board; thus again obtruding his opinion on the Secretary at War, in order, as far as possible, to force a compliance with it, although I am at a loss to comprehend with what propriety Mr. Knight could have advised a delegation of all the duties of the Members of the Medical Board to a single person, when he is himself, and has been for several years, unable to perform his own third part of those duties, without the aid of a superior medical officer as his assistant. Another instance of this sort of conduct in Mr. Knight has recently occurred, as may be seen in his letter of the 21st ulto. to

the Deputy Secretary at War, declining to obey the order of the Commander in Chief and Secretary at War, addressed to the Medical Board collectively, respecting a suitable provision to be made for the sick and wounded that may be expected from the army under the Earl of Chatham.

It was in consequence of the declaration of Mr. Knight, that he should protest against our letter of the 10th December, that the Physician-General and myself added a postscript to that letter, to which, from its great importance to the present subject, I most earnestly solicit your Lordship's attention.

But Mr. Knight's endeavours to carry his point, that one only should direct the whole of the Medical Department, did not stop here. The Physician-General and myself had, in the postscript just mentioned, stated abundant grounds for believing that the duties in question were too numerous and arduous to be properly discharged by any single individual, and Mr. Knight resolved to attempt to prove the contrary by what, after all, I cannot but think an unfortunate experiment. This was plainly his motive for obtaining the sole charge of the sick and wounded of the army of Spain, who, according to former usage, and my conception of his Majesty's Regulations of March 1798, ought to have fallen under my care.

I, however, quietly submitted to this new transfer of my duties to Mr. Knight, though when informed thereof, I thought it incumbent on me to wait upon his Royal Highness the late Commander in Chief, and request him to declare whether this transfer proceeded from any disapprobation of my former conduct on similar occasions; and I was satisfied as well as gratified by the assurance, which his Royal Highness was pleased to give me, of its not having proceeded from this cause.

Probably your Lordship will now think that I have given more than a sufficient number of instances and proofs of Mr. Knight's hostile conduct, which indeed has been a series of aggressions against his colleagues, but more par-

Chief and Secretary at War, for the board to provide for the reception of the sick from the army under Ld Chatham.

The Physician and Surgeon-General add a postscript to their letter of December 10th 1808.

Mr. Knight obtains the charge of the sick from Corunna which until that period were under the Surgeon-General.

The Commander in Chief expresses his approbation of the Surgeon-General's prior conduct.

Mr. Knight writes the letter of July 18th, 1809, requiring the dismissal of his colleagues.

ticularly against myself; and your Lordship may feel some surprise that Mr. Knight, after such acts, should have so much rashness as to complain that his colleagues did not assist him on a recent occasion, and to require their dismissal from their offices because there is a want of harmony between himself and them, a requisition which, in truth, is but a new effort to overturn the Army Medical Board, and possess himself of its patronage and power, small as they are.

Mr. Knight adverts to the 5th Report of the Commissioners of Military Enquiry, & the subsequent publications.

Mr. Knight appears to take credit to himself for not entering "into a relative view of our services," and for not adverting "to the 5th Report of the Commissioners of Military Enquiry, or to the disgraceful controversies that have grown out of it." On these several points I am ready to meet Mr. Knight, and submit our respective pretensions to your Lordship's decision; not that I feel any improper disposition to enumerate or boast of my services, but I cannot be so far wanting in common justice to myself as to suffer it to be even insinuated by Mr. Knight that he has in that respect any advantage over me;—nor can I admit of any reference on that subject to the 5th Report of the Military Commissioners, who, as is now notorious, (and it is most probably known to themselves) were grossly deceived respecting both Mr. Knight and myself, principally by the misrepresentations and falsehoods of those who continue to be his most intimate friends; misrepresentations and falsehoods which have chiefly occasioned the controversies resulting from that Report. And if your Lordship should ever condescend either to read the several publications by which those controversies were maintained, or to consult the public opinion concerning them, as expressed in the different Reviews, &c. or in the conversation of intelligent and impartial readers, you will, I am confident, find that if they are disgraceful, the disgrace appertains not to me, nor to any friend of mine; but to Mr. Knight or his partizans, particularly Drs. Jackson, Borland and M'Gregor.

“ The useful change or new constitution of office,” which has been expected and sought by Mr. Knight ever since the publication of the 5th Report, &c. is sufficiently intelligible to me, as it will doubtless be to your Lordship : but I am utterly unable to discover what he means by the “ many embarrassments thrown in his way, and the en-
“ vious shafts levelled at him ;” they may have been “ too
“ contemptible for a formal complaint,” and if he thought them so, they probably were very contemptible ; but if he supposes they have in any way proceeded from me, I request that he may be called upon for a particular statement of these his supposed grievances, and of his proofs or reasons for connecting them with me. There is indeed in his letter, abundance of loose declamation, abuse, and general unintelligible accusation, without the smallest attempt at proof, or even reference to any particular subject, excepting only that of the Report of the Board of General Officers, and in regard to that Report, I hope and believe that I have already fully justified myself in the letter and accompanying observations, recently addressed to your Lordship.

The Report
of the Board
of General Officers
acquit Mr.
Knight, no ac-
cuser present.

If that Report acquits Mr. Knight and his Deputies of all blame in the transaction to which it relates, he should recollect that it was an acquittal where no prosecutor or accuser was present ; and I must say, that if he foresaw that acquittal, and intended to convert it into a ground for attacking me, such intention ought to have been made known, and a citation given to me to appear and justify the charges which the Physician General and myself are now said by Mr. Knight to have made against him : instead of this, I was in a great degree ignorant even of the purpose for which the Board was constituted, (which appears to have been also the case of the Members of it themselves for some time) as well as of their proceedings, and I therefore do not consider myself as in any way implicated by those proceedings ; and I venture to be-

lieve that if I had undertaken to sustain any charges, the issue would have been different.

Mr. Knight expects the support of the Physician General and Surgeon General right or wrong, and though his own conduct was most offensive to them.

In regard to the statements made by the Army Physicians in their letters transmitted by us, Mr. Knight supposes that it was the duty of the Physician General and myself as his colleagues "to have afforded him assistance," right or wrong, a supposition hardly allowable in any case where the interest of the public and of humanity were so intimately concerned; and assuredly not to be entertained by one, whose conduct for many years had been so hostile and offensive to his colleagues.

Board of General Officers condemn the Regimental System on an extensive scale, or any length of time.

Mr. Knight pretends that the Physician General and myself appealed to the Commander in Chief "*against the*" "special delegation of the trust to him by his Royal Highness the late Commander in Chief:" this however is an unwarrantable assertion;—the evils, real or supposed, of that delegation were passed, and therefore unavoidable; and though we mentioned the unaccepted offer which we had made of our services, it was only to justify ourselves from any imputation of negligence. Equally unwarrantable is Mr. Knight's other assertion, that "the Report (of the Board of General Officers) does not in the least degree touch *on the preference of system*;" for it distinctly condemns Mr. Knight's regimental system, as having occasioned the irregularities which occurred at Salamanca, and as being "pregnant with much inconvenience, and incapable of being applied with advantage or safety upon an extensive scale, or for any length of time."

Mr. Knight solicits separation from his Colleagues.

With respect to the solicitation which concludes Mr. Knight's letter to your Lordship for an arrangement by which he may be completely separated from us, in regard to any public duty, I ought to notice the injurious language in which that solicitation is made, and by which his colleagues are represented as "two men whose official conduct has been *offensive to himself* as well as to the *decorum and discipline* of the service;" and to convince

your Lordship that this language is infinitely more applicable to Mr. Knight's conduct than to mine, I humbly entreat your Lordship's attention to the following statement of a recent and in many respects important transaction, which independently of all considerations regarding me, ought not to remain unknown to your Lordship.

About the 8th of last May, Dr. Bancroft transmitted to the Physician General a Paper, entitled "A Review of the Evils resulting from the present Management of Army Hospitals," and requested that, if he thought it deserving of attention, it might be communicated to the Secretary at War; which was done accordingly by Sir Lucas Pepys; and the late Secretary at War, having read and maturely considered that Paper, was pleased about the 18th of that month to refer the same, through the Physician General, to the consideration of the Medical Board *collectively*, with the exception of that part of the Paper which related to the increase of the stoppages deducted from the pay of the sick in hospitals. In consequence of this reference a Board was assembled at the office on the 22d June, when the letter from the Secretary at War was read, together with Dr. Bancroft's Paper, which with many interesting facts, contained strong objections against those alterations in the management of Regimental Hospitals for which Mr. Knight has taken, and been allowed to take, by incompetent judges, no inconsiderable degree of credit to himself, and rendered it probable at least that these changes are eventually more detrimental than beneficial to the public service; and at the same time, as is believed by Dr. Bancroft, highly injurious to the Soldiers admitted into Regimental Hospitals, where the Inspector General and his Deputies are believed, in order to gain applause by savings resulting from an injudicious and mischievous parsimony, to have intimidated and restrained the Regimental Surgeons from exercising their proper and necessary discretion as formerly, in allowing sufficient nourishment and comforts

Mr. Knight's conduct upon the investigation of Dr. Bancroft's Paper.

to their patients ; an interference tending unavoidably to occasion at least a procrastination in the recoveries of those who pass through Regimental Hospitals, (and who may amount to 60,000 annually or more) and this, although the stoppages from the soldier's pay, if not unjustly accumulated or improperly expended, would provide them with every thing needful, or at least with every thing which ought to be paid for by them.

As the truth or falsehood of Dr. Bancroft's allegations on this subject might be most readily ascertained by the returns of the Regimental Surgeons in Mr. Knight's Office, and by his correspondence with them, and as he could not be injured by the evidence of his own documents, the Physician-General and myself thought it most proper that recourse should be had to that evidence as the foundation and guide of our future proceedings ; from various obstructions, however, we could not begin our examination of them till Monday the 12th of June, Mr. Knight being present ; but he, instead of co-operating to fulfil the duty assigned to the Board *collectively*, thought proper to interrupt our proceedings by angry expressions, and by direct objections against our intended examinations ; our duty was thus rendered extremely disagreeable and even obstructed in a considerable degree ; we however proceeded, without any selection, to examine the weekly Hospital Returns of two Regiments for the year 1808, and found that no full diet had been granted to any patient in the Hospital of either of these regiments, even for a single day during the whole year, though there were cases in which, as far as we can judge, it would have been highly useful.

Much time having been lost by the altercations into which Mr. Knight had forced us, we then found it necessary to adjourn until the next day, intending as fast as possible to examine the weekly Hospital Returns of all the regiments in Great Britain during the year 1808, and hoping that Mr. Knight, upon better reflection, would alter his conduct. But in this we were disappointed, the

same conduct being renewed the next day, and with aggravation; Mr. Knight saying that as Dr. Bancroft was an officer on half pay, his paper ought not to be regarded; that our investigation of it was a personal attack upon himself; that we ought, as his colleagues, to assist him rather than prosecute such an enquiry; that he could easily recriminate, and had an equal right to support Dr. Jackson against us; that we should soon be attacked by Colonel Wardle, &c. Seeing that these intimations and menaces were ineffectual, Mr. Knight produced and read to us a letter from himself to the Secretary at War, which had been prepared for the occasion, and was replete with invective, and which charged us with insidiously giving effect to the tirade of an half-pay officer against him, our colleague; it was, in short, calculated, as Mr. Knight avowed, to cause a dissolution of the Medical Board, by shewing that the members of it could no longer act together; and this letter he threatened to send immediately to the Secretary at War, or to demand a court-martial on himself, if our investigation was continued. It was not my wish to hasten matters to the violent extremity sought by Mr. Knight; I declared, however, that I would not say or do any thing to induce him to desist from sending in that letter, and much less stop an enquiry of such importance; the Physician-General, however, seemed unwilling to increase Mr. Knight's animosity, or to expose himself to the effects of his resentment; he also probably thought, (as indeed I did) that it would not only be most irksome, but impossible for us to continue our examinations, circumstanced as we then were; for as Dr. Bancroft's paper had, if the Physician-General deemed it proper, been referred to the board *collectively*, we could not object to Mr. Knight's presence, and so long as he should be present, there was no prospect of an end to that misconduct which had in a great measure frustrated the object of our meeting on the preceding day, and which now hindered us from making the smallest progress. Sir

Sir L. Pepys,
in consequence
of Mr. Knight's
conduct puts an
end to the in-
vestigation of
Dr. Bancroft's
paper.

Lucas Pepys, for these or other reasons, determined not to prosecute the investigation any farther, and I could have no right to continue it alone.—Our enquiry being thus stopped, the Physician-General, to whom Dr. Bancroft's paper had been more immediately committed, undertook to report the matter to the Secretary at War. How this was performed I cannot explain from my own knowledge; but I have reason to believe that Sir Lucas, through delicacy to Mr. Knight, abstained completely from mentioning any part of his indecorous conduct, which, if it had been truly reported, would, I am persuaded, have induced the Secretary at War to employ other means for prosecuting an investigation of great public importance; for certainly the reasons which led your Lordship's predecessor to refer that paper to the Army Medical Board, must have acquired additional force in his mind by what we had observed in the Hospital Returns, during our examination; and Mr. Knight's anxiety to stop the progress of it will induce most persons to infer that at least he did not expect that a farther inspection of the Returns in question would lead to a favourable issue for himself; and it was probably on this occasion that Mr. Knight, according to his own description, thought the "ground to be shaking under him;" that very ground on which he has founded all his pretensions to greater merit than his colleagues, and to a predominancy of influence, sufficient to procure their removal at his pleasure.

Having thus, as I trust, satisfactorily proved that Mr. Knight's conduct has alone occasioned those divisions in the Medical Board which now make it necessary to remove either him, or the Physician General and myself, your Lordship and the Commander in Chief will, I think, have no doubt concerning the person on whom this sort of punishment ought in justice to be inflicted; and in regard to the good of the service, there will, I presume, be as little room for hesitation: for if Mr. Knight's ambitious views, implacable temper, and overbearing

disposition, have produced discord at, and led him to attempt the destruction of, a Board, where the Physician General and myself had previously officiated for eight years with either Mr. Gunning or Mr. Rush under more difficult circumstances, without the smallest disagreement, it may be presumed that the same views, temper, and disposition in Mr. Knight would produce similar effects with any new members, who might be appointed instead of the Physician General and myself, particularly as he is so adverse to the existence of any such Board; and in the improbable event of its being determined by your Lordship and the Commander in Chief to confide all the duties and power of the present Board and its members to a single person, I can hardly suppose that this person will be Mr. Knight, prejudiced, and, as I might say, infatuated as he is on particular subjects, and especially against General Hospitals, which are so indispensably necessary on various occasions.

There is, perhaps, only one situation where this prejudice might be almost harmless; I mean that which has lately become vacant by the death of Sir John Hayes, in the Ordnance Department, where, from the peculiarity of the service, and the assistance afforded by the line, Mr. Knight's favourite system is in sole use.

With these statements and explanations I humbly submit my pretensions and deserts to the justice of your Lordship and the Commander in Chief, in the fullest confidence that my assiduous devotion to the public service, during the space of forty years, will, in your Lordship's equitable discernment counterbalance the artifices and misrepresentations of my adversary.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

With great Respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient

Humble Servant,

(Signed) T. KEATE.

N. B. The several documents marked from No. 1 to No. 8, which are referred to in the preceding Letter, were considered by the writer of it as fully justifying his statement; but from a desire not to extend these pages unnecessarily they are omitted.

POSTSCRIPT.

It being of great importance, to ascertain how far the arduous task delegated to the Surgeon General by the Letter of the Secretary at War of the 6th of August, viz. that of generally superintending and making provision for the numerous sick of the army under Lord Chatham, together with the other duties of the Army Medical Board, were properly discharged, notwithstanding Mr Knight's *secession*, the following testimony, given by the Commander in Chief, (Sir David Dundas) to the House of Commons, is selected from other evidences on that subject, as being pertinent and satisfactory, viz.

“ Orders were given at home to apply and prepare barracks on the coast district for the reception of a large number of sick. The Medical Board had directions to administer every necessary aid on their arrival; all this was done in sufficient time, and the service was well executed in all its branches: of that part of the service I think I can take upon me to say I never had a single complaint from the commanding officers of the districts, and every thing went on well, and about 13,000 men passed through those hospitals.”

The above relates to the service at home; but as misconception has arisen concerning that in Walcheren, especially in regard to the supplies of medicines, &c. for the sick in that island, it is thought necessary to add the following letter, addressed to the Chairman of the Com-

mittee of the House of Commons for enquiring into the Walcheren Expedition, which, it is believed, will afford satisfactory explanations upon that subject.

[COPY.]

Albany, March 5th, 1810.

Sir,

Having reason to fear that the evidence which I was suddenly called to deliver to the Committee of Enquiry of the House of Commons respecting the Walcheren Expedition, was not sufficiently explicit and comprehensive upon some of the points on which I was examined, I beg permission through you to state the following facts, as supplementary and explanatory of my former evidence, and as being expedient to enable the Committee to form just opinions concerning the several matters to which they relate.

1st, In regard to the supposed deficiency of Bark, I beg leave to state, that I had been restricted by a positive War-Office order from sending out any supplies to troops in foreign stations, except upon requisitions for such supplies being received by me from the head of the Medical Department on those stations. The army, besides, which was sent to Zealand, and whose numbers had been officially notified to the Medical Board as amounting to 30,000 men and four regiments of cavalry, had been provided with bark sufficient for the usual consumption of 34,000 men during six months; and this quantity would have sufficed for five weeks consumption, if even the half of the army had fallen sick on the day of landing, an event out of all human probability. Such a provision, therefore, precluded all apprehension that bark would be wanting so soon after the debarkation of the troops in Walcheren

was known here, as to make it necessary for me to deviate from the rule of the service, particularly as the Inspector of Hospitals with that army had received precise instructions to send to me frequent returns of the quantities of medicines consumed, and of the supplies wanted; and as the small distance from that island also rendered the speedy compliance with his requisitions a matter of apparent certainty. The first requisition for bark that was made to me by the head of the Medical Department in Walcheren, extended only to 1000lbs. and this requisition was not accompanied by any account of the expenditure of that medicine; upon the very day of my receiving that requisition, viz. on the 18th Sept. I saw the acting Apothecary General, and gave into his hands an order signed by myself for that quantity of bark, and at the same time urged him verbally to provide it with all the promptitude he could; and I likewise wrote to the Storekeeper General on that day, desiring that he would forward its shipment and conveyance by "the first possible opportunity!" This will, I trust, appear to the Honorable Committee to be all that it was incumbent on me to do at that time; considering too, that Mr. Webb's letter did not intimate any very urgent need of bark, and that his subsequent letters, and also the first letters of his successors in that department, were altogether silent upon that subject; and whatever delays in the expediting of that bark might have arisen afterwards, they should be laid to the charge of the departments in which they occurred, and not of mine, which had absolutely no farther duty or concern therein than to make the formal Requisition to the Apothecary-General. Being anxious, however, that no want of that medicine should be experienced, I made several enquiries respecting the progress of the parcel I had so ordered to the place of its destination, and upon finding in the beginning of October that it was still detained here,

pp 33-34 after p. 38

5thly, As to the mode in which the sick were brought on shore upon their return to England, I must observe that this did not rest with the Medical Department, but with the Transport Board.

6thly, In regard to my not proceeding to Walcheren, I beg to remind the Honorable Committee, that my going thither was altogether incompatible with the execution of the urgent duties in this country specially assigned to me by the Commander in Chief and Secretary at War, as expressed in Mr. Moore's Letter of the 15th August; but that I nevertheless declared my readiness to go to that Island, if my superiors thought that my services there would be more useful than at home.

More than forty years have elapsed since I entered his Majesty's service, and more than sixteen since I became a Member of the Army Medical Board, during which my share of its duties have been most arduous and laborious, and though disagreements have sometimes arisen within the latter part of the time without any fault of mine, as may be proved by official documents in my possession, I most confidently aver, that I have never allowed them, in any instance, to influence my official conduct to the detriment of his Majesty's or the Public Service, even in the slightest degree; and if a contrary opinion should unfortunately exist in the minds of any Members of the Committee, or if the facts I have now had the honor to state should not remove all unfavorable impressions respecting me, I beg leave humbly to express my most anxious wish for a more particular and distinct enquiry, concerning every part of my conduct, which may be supposed blameable, or even questionable; though from a defect of hearing and impaired health, as well as from my having been necessarily much absent from London, in making arrangements for receiving the sick constantly pouring in from Walcheren, I am induced to think that the desired information might have been more conveniently obtained by examining my Assistant, Mr.

Robert Keate, who has been most intimately acquainted with every transaction in my office, and who without any such defect, would probably have recollected more accurately and circumstantially than I could do, the dates and details of any transaction upon which it might have been deemed necessary to question him. I am myself, however, conscious of nothing which ought in justice to deprive me of the credit and remuneration due to a long, faithful, and meritorious discharge of the numerous duties, attached to the several appointments with which his Majesty was graciously pleased to honour me,

I have the honor to be

Most respectfully

Your very obedient

Humble Servant,

T. KEATE.

To the Chairman of the Committee
of Enquiry on the Walcheren
Expedition.

As it is already in evidence before the House of Commons in the examination of Mr. Keate, Assistant to the Surgeon General, that the latter is restricted, by the instructions of government, from sending any medicines to foreign stations, except by requisition from the principal Medical Officer of the department abroad; and as an instance was stated in the House, which occurred at Gibraltar, it may be proper here to introduce the extract of a letter from Dr. Nooth, late Superintendant General of Hospitals, at Gibraltar, to the Surgeon General, viz.

Purton, near Wootton Bassett,
19th May, 1808.

“ Dear Sir,

“ You must without doubt recollect, that soon after my arrival at Gibraltar in 1803, I reported to you the state of

the Medical and Purveyor's stores in that garrison, and that I observed to you that it was requisite that Gibraltar should be at all times well supplied with such stores; as it ought to be considered as a depôt for the use of the troops at that post, and for such other troops as the exigences of the service may make it necessary to employ in the Mediterranean. The want of such a depôt had, as I understood, occasioned some distress during the late war, and I therefore thought it right to draw your attention to that circumstance, especially as it was daily expected at that time that hostilities would be renewed betwixt Great Britain and France. In consequence of this communication, you very judiciously, in my opinion, sent an ample supply of Hospital stores to Gibraltar, sufficient indeed to induce Sir Thomas Trigge, our Lieutenant Governor at that time, to report to the War Office, that the stores that had been sent were in a great measure unnecessary. Had Sir Thomas Trigge however, spoken to me on the subject, I should I believe, have convinced him that the exigencies of the service may require so ample a supply. The orders that followed the statement from the Lieutenant-Governor, you must recollect too well to need any detail of them, particularly as you were officially called upon to give your reasons for your conduct respecting those stores.

“The explanation that was given by you was not, however, considered as altogether satisfactory at home, and I was accordingly ordered to send a certain proportion of these stores to the West Indies, and to divide the remainder betwixt the garrison of Malta and Gibraltar. But as no opportunity of sending stores to the West Indies occurred, none of course were sent thither, but about one-third of the whole was sent to Malta just before the appearance of the Yellow Fever at Gibraltar.

“It was, in my opinion, particularly fortunate that there was no possibility of fulfilling the Orders from the War Office by sending stores to the West Indies, for the Yellow Fever soon occasioned an unusual demand for hospital stores and medicines, and had we not had a very

ample supply, the whole of the garrison, and likewise the inferior orders amongst the inhabitants would have suffered much more than they really did during the prevalence of that fatal epidemic amongst us. The Hospital Department was, by General Orders, called upon to furnish every thing that was necessary, such as tents, bedding, utensils, medicines, &c. for such of the inhabitants as were removed and encamped on the neutral ground, and the demands for the regimental sick of the garrison became very soon enormous.

“ It so happened at this time, that the Barrack Office was in want of bedding, and orders were given to the Hospital Department to supply the wants of that office, and as the Artillery Stores were at this time very badly supplied, both the corps of artillery and artificers were to be supplied with every thing that was requisite for their sick. Fortunately we had wherewithal to answer these numerous demands on our department, notwithstanding the great and necessary consumption, and likewise the actual waste which our fears dictated, and which the public alarm seemed to render necessary.”

and that the sickness was increasing among the troops at Walcheren, I lost no time in procuring several other parcels of Bark, amounting to 1800lbs. to be sent chiefly from London by coaches to Harwich and Deal, and forwarded by the Packet to Flushing, without waiting for any more Requisitions; subsequently to which 1500lbs. more of Bark were sent off, and arrived there in the course of that month. I am enabled to assert that in fact no want of Bark, or of any other Medicine ever existed for a single instant among our army in Walcheren, in proof of which I may state that one division B. by the vessel *3 Sisters*, which was shipped in July and arrived there on the 1st of August, was not opened till the 3d of November, and another, which arrived in the *Diana Packet* on the 17th September, had not been inspected till the 23d of October, and although the services of the Army and Navy are in the constant habit of accommodating each other, it appears to have never been found necessary to make any application to the medical officers of the navy for Bark. It appears also that the quantity sent from this country to Walcheren, including the original supplies, amounted to 6954lbs. and that the consumption thereof had, up to the 19th November, amounted only to 3132lbs. leaving 3822lbs. unexpended and in store, and this exclusive of 1460lbs. that had been purchased, of which I received no account.

2dly, In regard to the alleged deficiency of Medical Officers, I have to state that the duty and the power of providing Physicians and Hospital Mates, the two classes most wanted, did not belong to me, but to the Physician-General and Inspector-General; and that when I had made, as I did, the proper formal Requisitions to them, I had exercised, in respect to those classes, my authority to its fullest extent. In respect to Staff Surgeons, the care of providing them certainly belonged to me; and that they were duly provided and dispatched as they came from their

respective districts, may be proved by documents in my office; I however did more; for knowing the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient number of Hospital Mates, I, so early as the month of July, forwarded to the War Office, and strongly recommended for adoption a plan addressed to me by an Army Physician, for the creation of a new class of Medical Assistants to perform a part of the duties of Hospital Mates, in compounding medicines under the denomination of Dispensers; which plan was accordingly adopted: and I afterwards solicited and obtained permission to obtain the temporary aid of the Physicians and Surgeons of the great London Hospitals, and also of able country Practitioners, in treating the numerous sick who were sent back from Walcheren, by which the most essential benefit was obtained, and the nation relieved from any additional burthen of permanent Medical Appointments in the Army.

3dly, On the head of Bedding or Blankets, I have to state that no want of those articles was ever reported to me till very late in the campaign; but that I procured 2000 sets of Bedding to be sent to Walcheren without any Requisition to my department, viz. 1000 sets on the 6th September, and 1000 sets on the 6th October, and I had given directions for sending a much greater number, when the Storekeeper General reported to me, "that an immense quantity existed there in the Quarter-Master General's Department."

4thly, Concerning the unprovided manner in which the sick were sent home in transports, it is necessary to state, that I frequently remonstrated with the head of the Medical Department in Walcheren, and also made some representations to the Commauder in Chief at home on that subject, and particularly on embarking sick on board of transports without any Medical Officers, or even Orderlies to attend them, and that the Commander in Chief was thereupon pleased to issue positive orders on this head.